

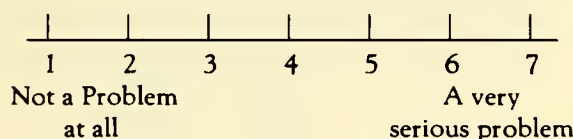
In Q6.2 an alternate display of a close-ended question with an ordered response is provided. Here respondents are allowed to choose from a numerical range. This form is limited mainly to in-person and mail surveys.

### Example 6. Close-ended Questions

**Q6.1** Would you say that the children in your household have gone boating often, seldom, or not at all in the past few years?

- a. Often . . . . . 1
- b. Seldom . . . . . 2
- c. Not at all . . . . . 3
- d. Don't know . . . . 8

**Q6.2** Below is a list of potential problems that teachers may have encountered in the fluoride mouthrinse program. Some teachers may consider the statement not a problem at all. Suppose these people are at one end of the scale at point number 1. Other teachers may consider the statement a very serious problem. Suppose these people are at the other end, at point 7. And of course, other teachers have opinions somewhere in between at point 2,3,4,5 or 6. Where would you place yourself on this scale for . . . .?



A. The fluoride mouthrinse program takes too much time.

**Q6.3** Think about the room in your house where you keep aspirin, tylenol and other medicines. Where in that room do you keep them? Are they: (PROBE FOR THE MOST COMMON PLACE)

- a. On an open shelf . . . . . 1
- b. In a cabinet . . . . . 2
- c. In a closet . . . . . 3
- d. In a medicine cabinet . . . . . 4
- e. On a night table . . . . . 5
- f. In a drawer . . . . . 6
- g. Or someplace else: SPECIFY \_\_\_\_\_ . 7
- h. Don't know . . . . . 8
- i. Don't have any . . . . . 9

In Q6.3 a combination of close-ended and open-ended questions with an unordered response is presented. The use of "or somewhere else" offers the respondent the option of answering an unnamed category. In the event that one response in the "somewhere else" category constitutes 10 percent or more of the overall responses, an additional category should be assigned and post-hoc coding performed. In Q6.3 the number 0 could be used for coding a high frequency response in the "somewhere else" category.

The choice of close-ended versus open-ended format depends primarily upon the type of information elicited, the goal of the research project, and the training and expertise of project interviewers.

Questions designed to elicit attitudes are best written in close-ended format. Attitudes are the most difficult type of information to obtain from a single question and are best adduced from a battery of easily answered items whose responses are viewed collectively to access the attitudes sought.

Belief questions can be written in open-ended or close-ended format depending upon the nature of the question. Questions designed to determine whether individuals hold certain beliefs or to test people's knowledge of facts are often written in open-ended format. The degree to which a belief is held, e.g., strongly agree—strongly disagree, very important—not important at all, is best determined in an ordered close-ended question.

Behavioral questions can be asked in either open- or close-ended format. If open-ended questions are to be used to obtain the number of past occurrences of a particular behavior (e.g., the number of times the respondent has gone to the doctor), researchers should guard against requiring too much precision on the part of respondents unless memory-assistance devices like charts or receipts are used. Precision can be improved by using a time limitation, e.g., last two months, that would place reasonable expectations on the part of the respondent to remember occurrences. Close-ended questions that allow the respondent the choice of a broad range lead to less precision. If continuous data such as the total number of occurrences are to be post-hoc categorized into groups for analysis purposes, it is advisable to use a close-ended question.

Attribute questions are normally written in a close-ended format. The sensitivity of attribute questions can often be reduced through offering categories or ranges as response options.